

The State We're in, and Our Focus on the Future

By Herb Whiteley

With the financial woes of the state of Illinois in the headlines daily, I want you to know how our College is responding to these challenging times.

For the fiscal year ending June 30, we'll be returning 3.65 percent of our budget, and for the fiscal year beginning in July, we'll be cutting considerably more, likely around 10 percent, or \$2 million, though the final amount is still unknown.

What I do know is that our College is visionary, collaborative, and strong. We will manage the many changes ahead by staying focused on our priorities:

- Excellence in the DVM program
- Research with real-life medical applications
- Establishing a College presence in Chicago
- Ensuring that our facilities match our needs
- Informing public health policy through the University of Illinois Center for One Medicine, One Health

Above all, our top priority remains the quality of education for veterinary students—your future colleagues.

Last year, our College launched the Illinois Integrated Veterinary Professional Curriculum. The process of implementing this new program has been transformative for our College. Faculty members from the basic and clinical sciences have forged unprecedented collaborations in the classroom. Students have spent considerable time outside the classroom, experiencing veterinary medicine in immediate and diverse settings. Everyone involved has provided feedback to help us shape and improve the curriculum.

Last year we also opened the Chicago Center for Veterinary Medicine, another major achievement for our long-term visibility and success in better serving animal owners and the veterinary profession in Illinois and recruiting students from underrepresented populations.

We accomplished these goals because of the bright minds and unwavering commitment of our faculty, students, and staff and because the Illinois veterinary community partnered with us. Those same resources will see us through the coming budget restrictions.

Thanks to the generosity and assistance of our alumni and friends, as of January we had raised \$32 million of our goal of \$35 million over the eight-year Brilliant Futures campaign, which ends in December 2011.

Now more than ever before, private support is vital for scholarships and fellowships for veterinary and graduate students, support for research and teaching initiatives, development of the new Clinical Skills Learning Center, improvements in facilities for the hospital and diagnostic laboratory, and outreach and recruitment programs in Chicago and elsewhere.

By putting us in touch with grateful clients who want to support what we do, and by making your own gift to further our mission, you can have a real impact on the future of veterinary medicine.

If you would like more information on our budget situation or would like to know how private giving makes a difference for students and the work of the College, please contact me at dean@vetmed.illinois.edu.